FDI in Telecom sector

1481. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether in order to achieve a telecom network coverage of 70 per cent against the current 20 per cent, Government propose to raise the Foreign Direct Investment in Telecom Sector to 74 per cent from 49 per cent;

(b) if so, the various aspects taken into consideration in this regard; and whether this involved any security angle; if so, the views expressed by the security and intelligence outfits in this regard; and

(c) the decision since taken in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) There is a need for infusing substantial amount of capital in the telecom sector for its expansion. Hence, a proposal to hike Foreign Direct Investment limits in telecom sector from 49% to 74% was announced in the Budget 2004-05. Various aspects including security angle associated with this proposal are subject to consultations with concerned ministries and Departments.

Microwave Link with Sri Lanka

1482. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Microwave Link has been established recently with Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the details and advantages of this link; and

(c) whether any similar link has been established or is planned with other neighboring countries also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Rameswaram (India)-Thalaimannar (Sri Lanka) 7 GHz Analog Microwave Link was established long back in 1982. This link was disrupted since 1985 due to problems in Sri Lanka and it was re-established in Dec. 2003 by installing 7 GHz 34 Mb Microwave Link. The advantage of establishing direct links with Sri Lanka is to route Indo-Sri Lanka traffic directly. This is objective of SAARC council.

(c) Yes, Sir. Direct Telecom links with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal are working. Their details are as below:-

Pakistan

(i) Attari-Lahore Analog Coaxial System (Working since long) No new link has been established recently.

Bangladesh

(i) Krishnagar-Chuadanga Analog 6 GHz MW (Working since long) No new link has been established recently.

Bhutan

(i) Hasimara-Phuntsholling STM-1 OFC (Established Recently)

(ii) Hasimara-Phuntsholling 2 GHz/Mb MW (Established few years back)

Nepal

(i) Raxaul-Birganj 140 Mb OFC (Established few years back)

(ii) Forbesganj-Biratnagar STM-1 OFC (Established few years back)

The following links have been Planned:-

Bangladesh

(i) Bongaon-Sarsha 7 GHz 34Mb DMW

(ii) Majdia-Chuadanga 7 GHz 34Mb DMW

Modernisation of Post Offices

1483. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of post offices modernised in Karnataka during 2003-04 and 2004-05;